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EST. 1992
#5
ROSE™
MEREDITH FINCH • IG GUARA

The Story So Far...

In the land of Ttereve, magical ability is a death sentence. Rose's village is destroyed and her mother killed when Queen Drucilla senses the emergence of a new magical power in her kingdom. Convinced that the queen is behind her loss, Rose embarks on a quest for vengeance and soon encounters of a band of rebels with their own agenda.

Ila and Rose are confronted with seemingly insurmountable odds after they are betrayed by Ila's daughter-in-law Margaret. Trapped, with no hope of rescue, they make the difficult decision to part company. Rose must continue the quest for her khat, Thorne, alone. Determined to live up to Ila's belief in her and fulfill her destiny, Rose is briefly able to access her magical abilities. and hears a desperate plea for help. It's Thorne.

Can Rose find Thorne and help him defeat the demons from his past before she is captured by the queen's huntsmen, or will they both be caught by Drucilla's horde? Find out now in the next exciting chapter of ROSE.

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MILLHAVEN.
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU TOLD HER, ILA. SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT YOU!
WILL, ROSE IS OUR BEST CHANCE TO DEFEAT DRUCILLA. I COULD NOT RISK HER GETTING CAUGHT. SHE DID WHAT SHE NEEDED TO DO.
I GOT THEM MAPS YA WANTED, BUT I DON' KNOW HOW YER GONNA TELL THE MOUSE TURDS FROM THE MOUNTAINS, THEY'RE SO OLD.
NO! I DON'T ACCEPT THAT! WE SAVED HER. WE ALMOST DIED PROTECTING HER FROM THAT...WHAT DID YOU CALL IT... THAT FALLEN CREATURE...
...WE NEED TO FIND HER.
HERE WE GO AGAIN.
LOOK, WILL, I AIN'T THE LEADER HERE, BUT IT SEEMS T' ME WE SHOULD BE FOCUSIN' ON THE HORDE THAT'S 'BOUT TO DESCEND ON US 'STEAD O' ONE LITTLE GURL WHO DON'T SEEM TO WANT OR NEED OUR HELP.

FEL IS RIGHT. DRUCILLA IS COMING. YOU KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO DO!
YOU ARE ASKING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE.
WE DON'T HAVE NEARLY ENOUGH FIGHTERS OR WEAPONS!
THEN WE ARE ALL DEAD.
GIVE ME THOSE MAPS, FEL.

THE ROAD TO MILLHAVEN.
KRAK
I SAID MARCH!
WE'RE SIX LEAGUES FROM MILLHAVEN, MY QUEEN. WE WILL REACH THE CITY'S GATES SOON.
WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS?
THEY KNOW WE'RE COMING. SEND OUT YOUR SCOUTS. I WANT TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE WALKING INTO.
WE ATTACK AT DAWN.
CONSIDER IT DONE, YOUR MAJESTY.
YI-YA!

YOU THERE! YOU ARE TRESPASSING IN THE FOREST OF THE QUEEN OF TTEREVE. IDENTIFY YOURSELVES.

THORNE! NO! WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?!

IT IS THE GIRL. SHE IS THE SOURCE OF THE MAGIC.
THE QUEEN WILL BE PLEASED.

I AM SORRY, LITTLE ONE. THIS COLLAR...IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME. SAVE YOURSELF. RUN!

LOOK CLOSELY, DANTE. ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM, OLD FRIEND?
EDWARD?
NO! IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
I SAW YOU FALL...YOU WERE DEAD...
WHAT NEW WITCHERY ARE YOU DOING HERE, GIRL? I WILL NOT HAVE THE MEMORY OF A NOBLE MAN AND FRIEND TARNISHED IN THIS WAY.
WHATEVER ELSE SHE MAY BE CAPABLE OF, THE GIRL IS INNOCENT. YOU CAN THANK YOUR QUEEN FOR THE MONSTER THAT NOW STANDS BEFORE YOU.
NOW GIVE ME THE GIRL...
...AND FOR THE SAKE OF WHAT WE ONCE MEANT TO EACH OTHER, I WILL LET YOU LIVE.

SSHOOOK
CHLING
THE GIRL STAYS WITH ME.
OH DEAR.
I DID SAY I WOULD LET YOU LIVE. I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T HAVE PRESUMED TO SPEAK FOR THE OTHERS. KAJ CAN BE SO IMPATIENT.
AVANI, GET THE GIRL. KAJ, STAY WITH THE KHAT. I WILL DEAL WITH SIR DANTE.

THIS WON'T TAKE LONG. DON'T EVEN *THINK* OF GOING ANYWHERE, GIRL.
I DON'T THINK THAT'S GOING TO BE A PROBLEM.
COME, DEMON.
LET'S DANCE.

EVER THE FOOL, DANTE. CHOOSING TO DIE RATHER THAN FAIL DRUCILLA. EVEN AFTER ALL SHE HAS DONE.
SHE SENT US TO FIND YOU.
TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
SHE KNOWS YOU ARE WEAK.

DON'T COME ANY CLOSER, YOU... YOU MONSTER!
FIGHTING IS USELESS, CHILD. THE QUEEN WILL GET WHAT SHE WANTS. SHE ALWAYS DOES.
...MUST... HELP HER...
ARRRRUGHHH!
I'LL DIE BEFORE I LET YOU TAKE ME TO DRUCILLA.
...IGNORE... PAIN...ROSE...YOUR GUARDIAN...NEEDS YOU...

I DID NOT SAY DRUCILLA NEEDED YOU ALIVE.
THOOM
UGggggHH!
ROSE. PLEASE. IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME. SAVE YOURSELF!
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

I'M CURIOUS. ARE YOU THIS LOYAL TO EVERY WOMAN WHO HATES YOU? YOUR MOTHER FOR INSTANCE?
OR JUST THOSE WHO WANT YOU DEAD?
CLANG
OUR INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT FINDING "THAT FOOL, DANTE" WERE VERY CLEAR. AND IF I'VE LEARNED ANYTHING FROM THIS...
AAARRRRH!
...NEVER DISAPPOINT THE QUEEN.

I TIRE OF THIS GAME. YIELD OR DIE.
VERY WELL.
>SOB< NEVER! >SOB< I WILL NEVER YIELD!
RRRRRAOOWW!
I AM THE LAST OF THE KHATZ! I WILL NOT FAIL MY GUARDIAN, NOW THAT I HAVE FOUND HER.
HUH?

RNARRLLL

THORNE?
DO NOT MOVE, GUARDIAN.
ARE YOU SO SURE OF YOURSELF, EDWARD, THAT YOU ARE NOW WILLING TO CHALLENGE A GUARDIAN AND HER KHAT?
IF I COULD OVERCOME THE POWER OF YOUR PUNY CHAINS TO SAVE MY GUARDIAN, HOW MUCH MORE DANGEROUS WILL WE BE FIGHTING TOGETHER?

TAKE AVANI AND GO.
AND TELL THE QUEEN TO GET READY.
THE GUARDIAN IS COMING FOR HER!
UGHHHH.

THEIR CAVALRY WON'T BE MUCH USE IN THE FOREST. THE ARCHERS CAN PICK THEM OFF WHEN THEY ARE FORCED TO BREAK COVER TO ATTACK THE TOWN WALLS.
HOW ARE PREPARATIONS INSIDE THE WALLS?
TRENCH DIGGING HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE TURNED EVERY USEABLE PIECE OF WOOD INTO ARROWS.
I STILL FEEL LIKE WE'RE MISSING SOMETHING IMPORTANT. WHY WOULD DRUCILLA COME ALL THIS WAY HERSELF? JUST TO PUT DOWN A REBELLION?
A GUARDIAN AND HER KHAT WALK THE LAND AGAIN. DRUCILLA WILL FEEL THE NEED TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF US. SHE WILL USE THE DESTRUCTION OF MILLHAVEN TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE REST OF TTEREVE.
BJARK. TAKE AS MANY MEN AS YOU THINK YOU'LL NEED. I WANT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OUT OF HERE TONIGHT. I WON'T RISK ANY MORE LIVES THAN I HAVE TO.
LOTTA GOOD THAT'LL DO 'EM.

YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY, FEL?
YEAH, I MEAN... WHERE YA GONNA SEND 'EM? AIN'T NO PLACE'S GONNA WANNA TAKE 'EM. NO ONE'S GOT 'NOUGH FOOD. AND SURE AS 'ELL AIN'T NO ONE'S GONNA WANNA HIDE 'EM FROM DRUCILLA.
YOU HAVE A BETTER SUGGESTION?
WHY DON'T YA ASK 'EM? THIS IS THEIR HOME, TOO. LET 'EM FIGHT FOR IT.
WE COULD USE THE HELP. THE CHILDREN COULD CARRY MESSAGES AND SUPPLIES, AND THE WOMEN WHO DON'T WANT TO FIGHT COULD CARE FOR THE WOUNDED.
NEVER MIND, BJARK. IT SEEMS I'M OVERRULED.
ALRIGHT THEN. SINCE THIS WAS YOUR IDEA, YOU'RE IN CHARGE. YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE HOW TO KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN. LET'S HOPE THEY'RE FAST LEARNERS.
EVERYONE TRY TO GET A FEW HOURS OF SLEEP. WE'LL MEET BACK HERE AT DAWN.

LOOK AT THIS PLACE, ILA. WE ARE FOOLS.
DRUCILLA'S ARMY IS GOING TO SLAUGHTER US TOMORROW.
PERHAPS.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?
WORRYING WILL NOT CHANGE THE OUTCOME. SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED TO HAVE FAITH.

THORNE! WHAT HAPPENED?! WHAT'S WRONG?!
THE COLLAR...IT'S MAGIC. IT MUST BE HOW DRUCILLA WAS ABLE TO ENSLAVE MY BROTHERS. TO WORK AGAINST THE WILL OF THE LEASH-HOLDER IS TO KNOW INDESCRIBABLE PAIN AND DESPAIR.
ONE MORE THING DRUCILLA WILL ANSWER FOR WHEN I'M A GUARDIAN.
NO. DON'T SPEAK THAT WAY. SEEKING VENGEANCE IS NOT THE ROLE OF A GUARDIAN.
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.
BUT FOR NOW LET'S STOP TALKING ABOUT DRUCILLA AND FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GET THIS COLLAR OFF.

I DON'T SEE A CLASP ANYWHERE...
MAYBE IF I JUST... PUULLLL.
I'M SORRY, THORNE. YOU SAVED MY LIFE AND I CAN'T EVEN SEEM TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO TAKE OFF THAT STUPID COLLAR.
SOME GUARDIAN I'M TURNING OUT TO BE. I CAN'T SAVE ANYONE.
DON'T WORRY, ROSE. WE WILL FIND A WAY.
TOGETHER.
...MMMggHHHHHH...
IT'S SIR DANTE?! HE'S STILL ALIVE!

IF YOU'VE COME BACK TO FINISH THE JOB, YOU'RE TOO LATE. I'VE SEEN ENOUGH BATTLE WOUNDS TO KNOW I'LL BE DEAD BY MORNING.
YOU'RE IN PAIN. I NEED TO STOP THE BLEEDING.
WHAT'S WRONG? WORRIED THAT...THAT BEAST WILL BE DRAWN TO THE SMELL OF BLOOD...?
SMACK
GO AWAY! I WILL DIE THE WAY I'VE LIVED. ALONE.
POOR SIR DANTE. I PROMISE I WON'T LEAVE YOU.
"EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY."
NEXT MONTH: THE REBELLION BEGINS...

NEXT MONTH

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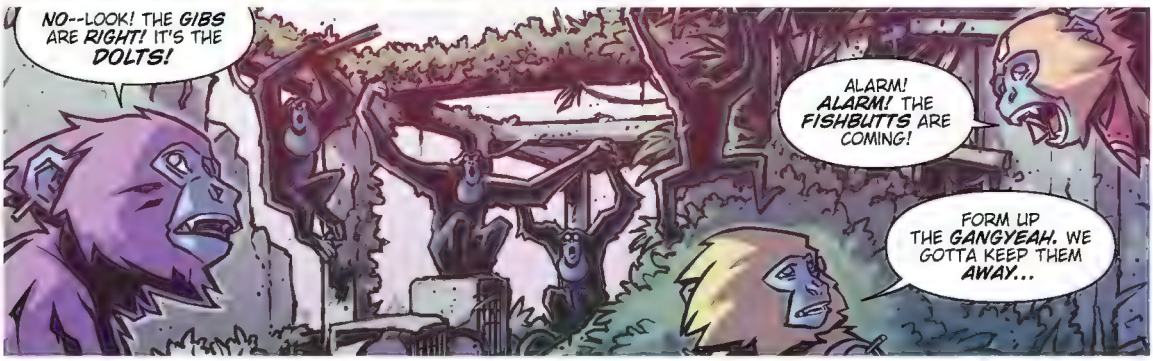
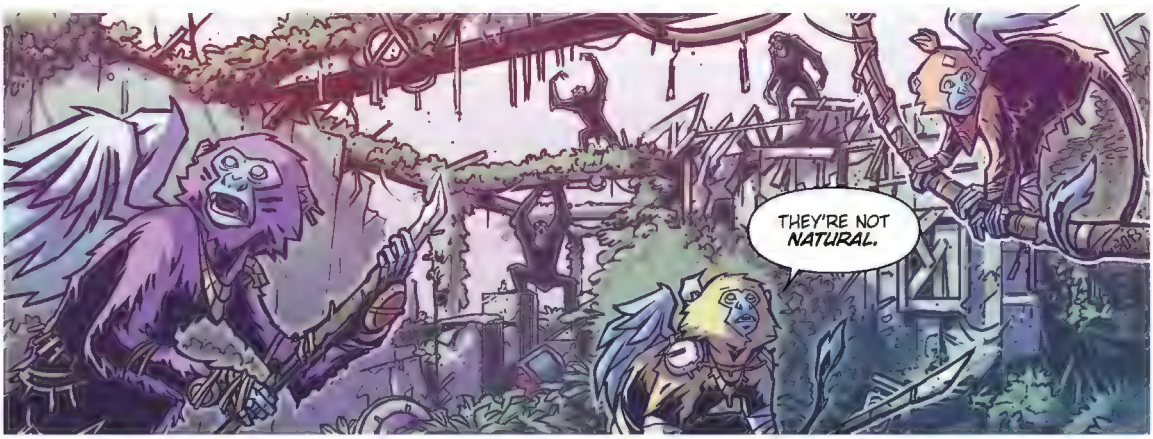
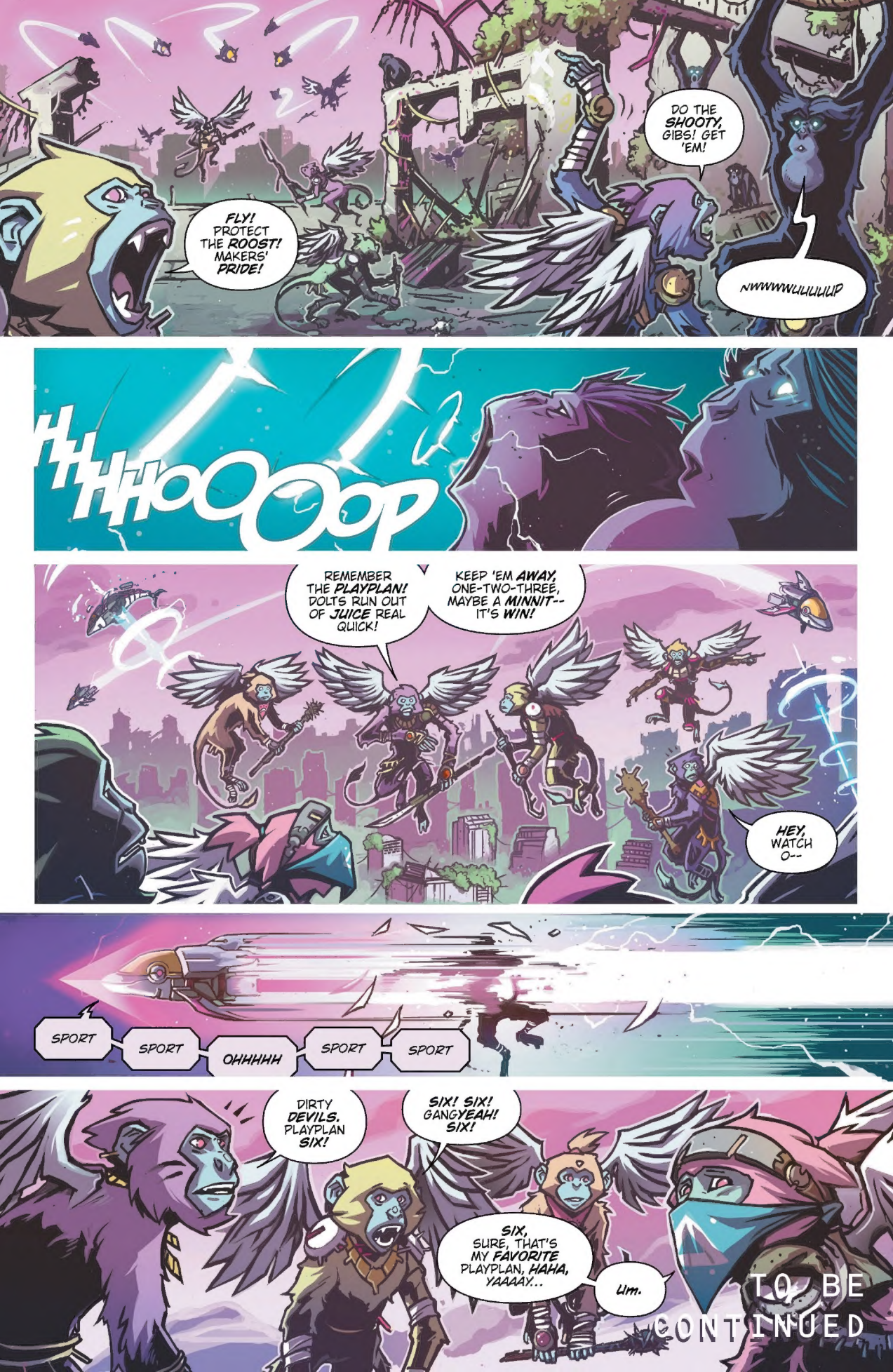




SPEAK TRULY, MY FINE FELLOWS: ARE THOU NOT PERKY? DOST THOU NOT TREMBLE FOR THE CHASE?
WHY-- I SEETHE! I EFFERVESCE! I MUST HAVE SPORT!
VERILY, I TOO HATH PRAYED FOR PREY! BUT--GOOD SIRS!-- MINE EYES BEHOLD SATISFACTION!


FLY! PROTECT THE ROOST! MAKERS' PRIDE!
DO THE SHOOTY, GIBS! GET 'EM!
NNNNNNUUUUUP
HHHOOOOOP
REMEMBER THE PLAYPLAN! DOLTS RUN OUT OF JUICE REAL QUICK!
KEEP 'EM AWAY, ONE-TWO-THREE, MAYBE A MINNIT-- IT'S WIN!
HEY, WATCH O--
SPORT
SPORT
OHHHHH
SPORT
SPORT
DIRTY DEVILS. PLAYPLAN SIX!
SIX! SIX! GANGYEAH! SIX!
SIX, SURE, THAT'S MY FAVORITE PLAYPLAN, HAHA, YAAAAY...
UM.
TO BE CONTINUED

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